

REMARKS

Claims 30 has been amended, claims 17-23 and 25-29 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 24 and 30 are pending and under consideration. No new matter is presented in this Amendment.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103:

Claims 17-23 and 25-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Osakabe (U.S. Patent No. 6,894,961), Maeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,072,759), and Akaha Kentaro (JP 2000-293931).

Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Osakabe (U.S. Patent No. 6,894,961), Maeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,072,759), Akaha Kentaro (JP 2000-293931) and Komoda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,701,063).

Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Osakabe (U.S. Patent No. 6,894,961), Maeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,072,759), Akaha Kentaro (JP 2000-293931), and Okada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,148,140).

As claims 17-23 and 25-29 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, the above rejections are moot. As such, it is respectfully requested that such rejections be withdrawn.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

Claim 24 stands allowed.

Claim 30 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 30 has been rewritten in independent form to include the features of the base claim. Therefore, Applicants assert that such claim is allowable and respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

STEIN, MCEWEN & BUI, LLP

Date: Dec. 9. 2008

By: 
Nathan H. Cristler
Registration No. 61,736

1400 Eye St., N.W.
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 216-9505
Facsimile: (202) 216-9510